

LDI Good Practice Guides:
'Blackboard Student User Guide'
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Blackboard Student User Guide



Blackboard®

Introduction

Blackboard is a Web-based Virtual Learning Environment which allows you to access learning material from any computer with internet access. It enables students to continue their learning activities, collaborate and access resources away from the lecture room.

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Before you start

To access Blackboard you must have a PC running Windows NT4, 95, 98, 2000, XP or Vista or a Macintosh. You must also have either Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator 4.0 or above.

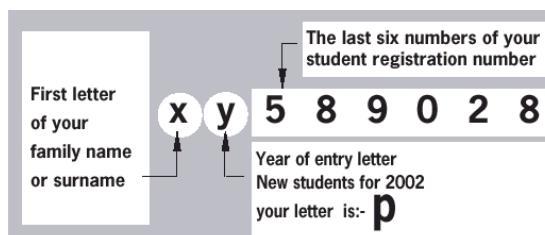
Usernames and Passwords

In order for you to access Blackboard you will need a username and password. You can work this out in the following way.

Your username is made up from:

- Your family name initial letter
- Your year of entry denoted by a single letter
- The last six digits of your student registration number

Now work out your own username as shown below:-



Password

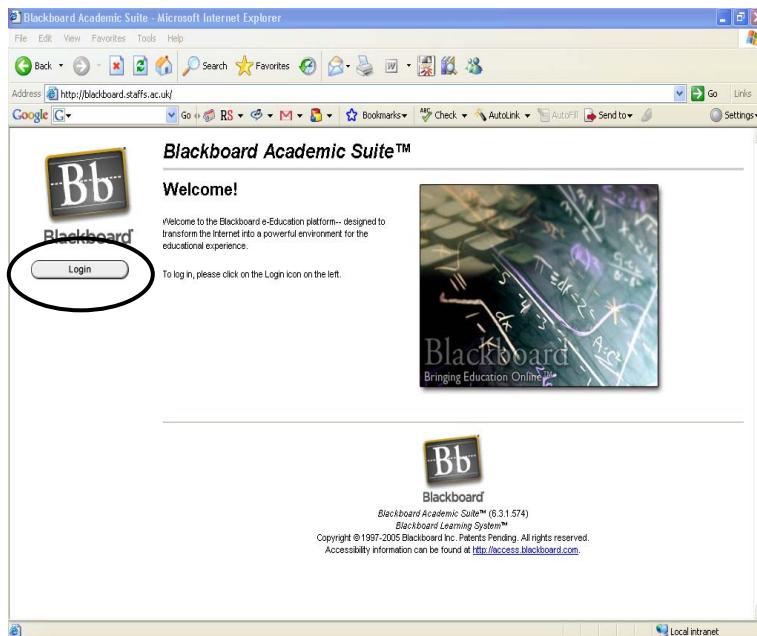
Your initial password is your date of birth, typed as six numbers with no spaces e.g. 201082

How do I access Blackboard?

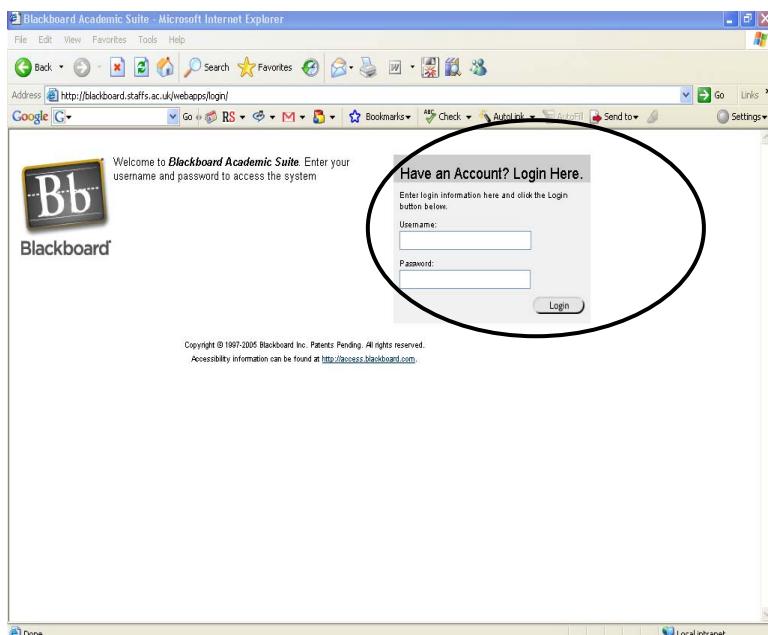
1. Start your web browser.
2. Carefully type in the following address, which will take you to

<http://blackboard.staffs.ac.uk>

3. Click on the **Login** button.



4. Now enter you username and password in the appropriate boxes and click the **Login** button once more.



Note: to exit Blackboard, when logged in, click **Logout** at top right of the screen.

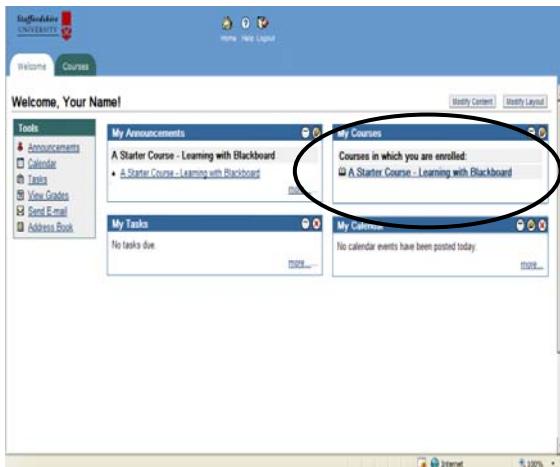
Getting to your Blackboard course

When you have entered your username and password correctly you will then enter the system. By default, Blackboard opens on the Welcome page as shown below

For those of you that are technically proficient, follow the instructions to the right for a quick access guide to your course. Otherwise for a more detailed guide, continue working through this document.

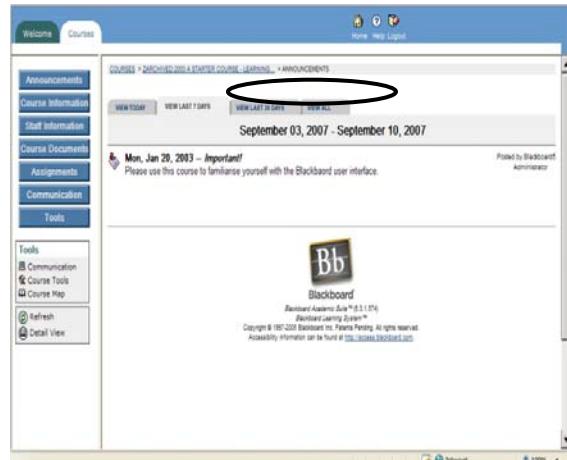
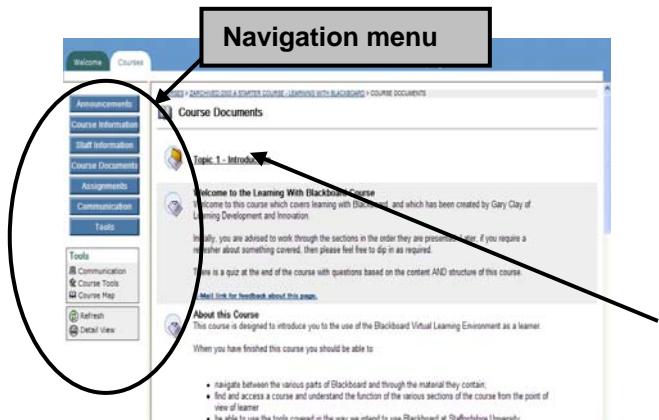
The **Welcome** page has a number of different areas: **My Courses**; **My Announcements**; **My Calendar**; **My Tasks** and also **Tools**. More information on these areas and the user interface appears later in the section “**Getting more out of Blackboard**”.

Welcome page



The **My Courses** area lists all the courses in which you are participating, click on the name of the course you want to access.

When you enter a course you are presented with the Announcements section. As its name suggests, Announcements provides a means for your lecturer to communicate with you e.g. to alert you to important dates such as when an assignment is due, etc.



Course Documents

Note: you will always know what section you are in due to the header changing accordingly. For example, in this case Course Documents is displayed here.

Navigating your way through a course

To access the various areas in your Blackboard course, single click on a Navigation menu button. Below is the **Course Documents** section of a course. Depending on how the lecturer has structured the course you will see documents and/or folders.

This icon represents a folder which will contain documents or possibly more folders. Click on the underlined link to access it.

This Icon represents a document for you to read. This may also contain attachments for you to download i.e. Word documents.

This icon represents a Web link.

Click on the underlined blue link to access them.

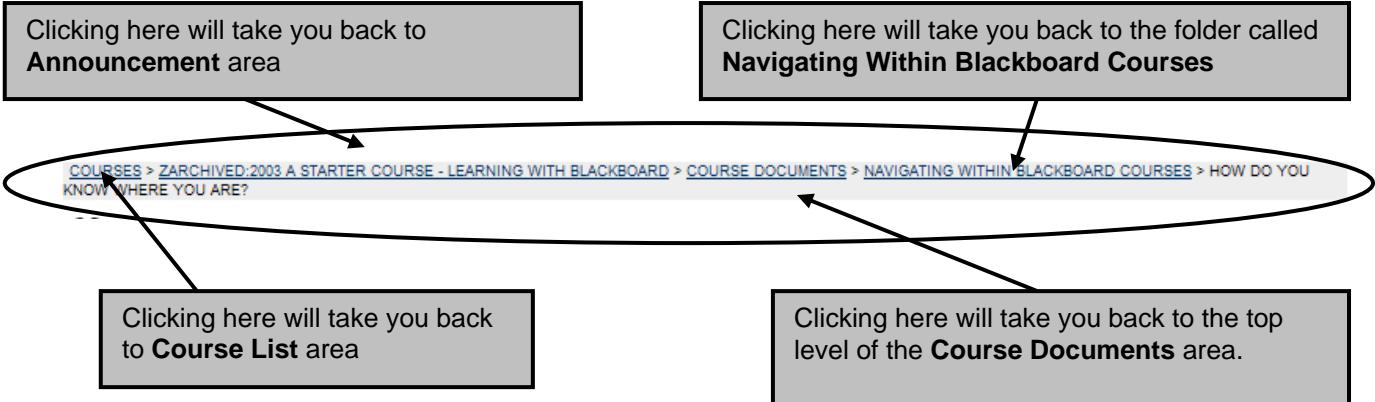
After accessing the Course area you can return by clicking on the **Back** button on your Web Browser.

If at anytime you get lost in Blackboard there are a number of ways for you to return to where you started.

- Clicking on the **Welcome** tab will take you back to **Welcome page** from where you can select your course from the list once more.
- Or if you are lost within a folder you can use the navigation links, when present at the top of the right hand frame as shown below.

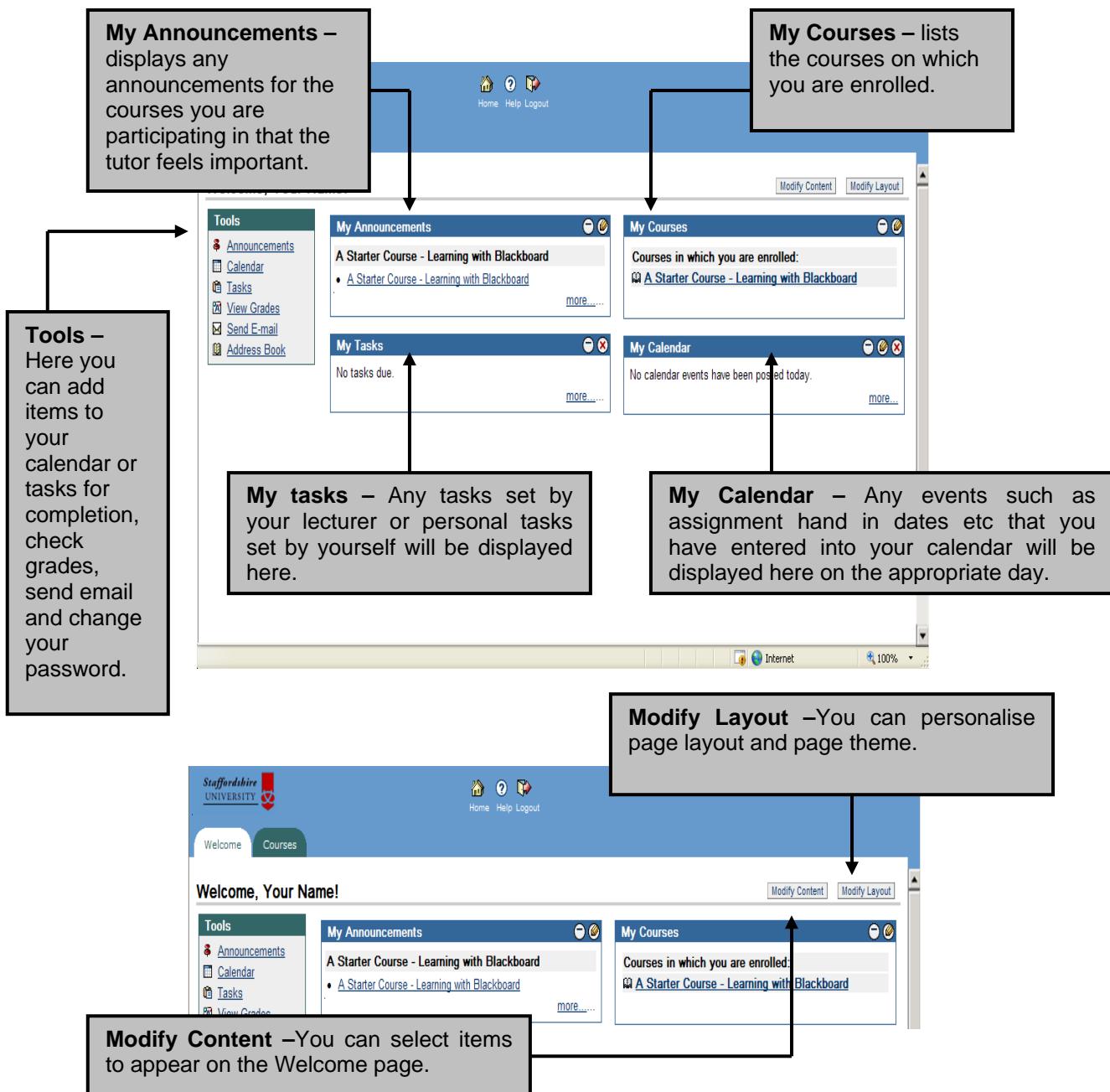
The example below illustrates that you are within a document called **“How do you know where you are?”** which is within a Folder Called **“Navigating within Blackboard courses”** which is located within the **Course Documents** area of your Blackboard module.

You can use this to keep track of where you are but also to jump back to any specific area by clicking on the blue underlined link.



Getting more out of Blackboard

The User interface (Welcome screen)



Main Course Areas

Course Information	Module specific information, assessments, how the module works.
Staff Information	Details of your lecturers and other staff associated with the course.
Course Documents	This is the heart of the Blackboard course where all module-specific learning and teaching materials and activities can be found. The information is often divided into a series of folders/sections which may be structured e.g. on a weekly basis.
Assignments	This section is where you will find your assignments. Regulations concerning the assignments, and other assignment related material may be found here
Communication	Links to the communication tools, including Send Email, Discussion Board and Group Pages.
Tools	Allows access to Digital Drop Box (file exchange between yourself and the Lecturer,) My Grades, Calendar, User Manual and The Electric Blackboard amongst others.

Using the Discussion board

The discussion board allows an online discussion to take place among students and lecturers. Clicking the **Discussion Board** link in the **Communication** area of Blackboard will bring up a list of forums that your lecturer has created. In order to post a message you must first enter a forum; click on the name of the forum to enter it

1. Click the **Communication** button on the Blackboard navigation panel.

Communication

2. Click on the discussion board link.



[Discussion Board](#)

3. You will now see a list of the forums. In the example shown there are three forums set up, **Thoughts about Blackboard**, **Student Life in Stoke** and **Student Life in Stafford**. Click on the forum you wish to enter.

COURSES > ZARCHIVED:2003 A STARTER COURSE - LEARNING... > COMMUNICATIONS > DISCUSSION BOARD

Thoughts about Blackboard
A forum allowing you to post comments and thoughts about Blackboard generally or this course in particular. Your comments may be used to help develop this course further.

Number of Messages: 2
[1 New]

Student Life in Stafford
A forum for your comments about life as a student at the Stafford campus, ideas for places to go, etc.

Number of Messages: 6
[All New]

Student Life in Stoke
A forum for your comments about life as a student at the Stoke site, local pubs, etc.

No Messages

Any questions...
Are you confused about something, if so ask here...

No Messages

Clinical placement thoughts
A place to discuss your feelings about your placements.

No Messages

4. Once in the forum you will see a list of topics currently being discussed, these are called threads. To read the thread click on its title as shown below.

COURSES > ZARCHIVED:2003 A STARTER COURSE - LEARNING... > COMMUNICATIONS > DISCUSSION BOARD > THOUGHTS ABOUT BLACKBOARD

Thread

Add New Thread

VIEW UNREAD MESSAGES

Blackboard seems to be....

Dummy, your name

Tue Jan 28 2003 10:00

EXPAND ALL + COLLAPSE ALL -

SEARCH

SHOW OPTIONS

Sort by Default

OK

5. When you have clicked on the thread you wish to view you are shown the discussion and further details such as the forum the thread belongs to, date, Author etc. If you feel you would like to respond to this thread click on the **Reply** button.

COURSES > ZARCHIVED:2003 A STARTER COURSE - LEARNING... > COMMUNICATIONS > DISCUSSION BOARD > MESSAGE VIEW

Forum: Thoughts about Blackboard

Date: Tue Jan 28 2003 10:00

Author: Dummy, your name <student@staffs.ac.uk>

Subject: Blackboard seems to be....

User friendly and fairly intuitive!

Reply

Thread Detail

Blackboard seems to be....

Dummy, your name

Tue Jan 28 2003 10:00

OK

6. When responding to a thread you will notice that the subject line is already completed for you as your comments will be relevant to that particular discussion. Fill in your response in the **Message:** field. Click the **Submit** button to post your response and return to the forum page

NB. To access a different forum click on the **OK** button which takes you back to the list of available forums and click on the one you want to access

[COURSES](#) > [ZARCHIVED:2003 A STARTER COURSE - LEARNING...](#) > [COMMUNICATIONS](#) > [DISCUSSION BOARD](#) > [REPLY MESSAGE](#)

Response

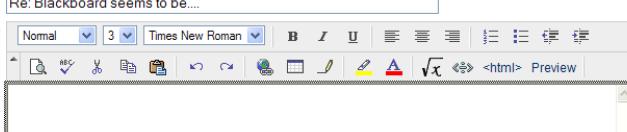
Forum: Thoughts about Blackboard

Date: Tue Sep 11 2007 00:48

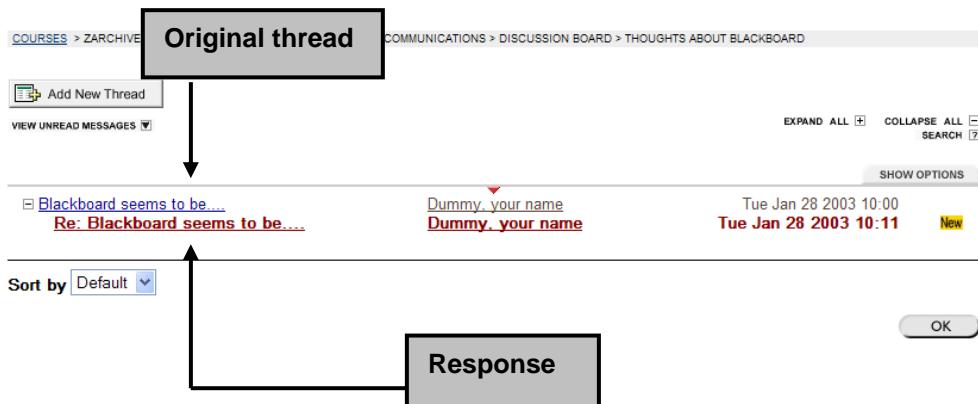
Author: Your Last Name, Your Name!

Subject:

Message A detailed toolbar for a rich text editor, featuring buttons for font (Normal, 3, Times New Roman), size, bold, italic, underline, alignment (left, center, right, justify), lists (bullet, numbered), and various icons for image, link, and other document functions.

A large, empty text area for the message content, enclosed in a dotted border.

The discussion board is structured in a way that you can see which comment is relevant to which thread. Your reply will be indented under the first message that started the thread.



To leave the **Discussion Board** just keep clicking **OK** to get back to the list of Communication tools or click a button in the left hand frame.

Sending email

Blackboard allows you to send e-mail to fellow students or to your Lecturer. Follow the steps below.

1. Click the **Communication** button on the Blackboard navigation panel.



2. Click on the **Send Email** link

3. You will then see this screen allowing you to select who you would like to send a message to. Any of these choices will display a screen with the **To:** field automatically filled in, or in the case of **Select Users** or **Select groups** check boxes to check off.

4. Below is an example of the screen for sending an email using the **Select Users** function. When you have filled in the Subject line and the message scroll to the bottom of the screen and click **Submit**. Note you can attach a document by clicking **Add** under **Add Attachments** then **Browse** to select the document and **Submit**.

You still must use your own email client to **READ** e-mail!

Blackboard can **SEND** e-mail but does not provide a facility for reading it.

Select Users

1 Recipients

To: <input type="checkbox"/> Austin, Carol <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clark-Carter, David <input type="checkbox"/> Clay, Gary <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clews, Sue <input type="checkbox"/> David, Judy <input type="checkbox"/> Dummy, Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Bancroft, Gordon <input type="checkbox"/> Clarke, Edward <input type="checkbox"/> Cleary, Stephen <input type="checkbox"/> Das Gupta, Mani <input type="checkbox"/> Dummy, LDC <input type="checkbox"/> Dummy, your name
---	--

2 Enter Message Details

From: student@staffs.ac.uk

Subject: Can we study together

Message:

```
Can we meet at 4pm today in the Courtyard
restaurant?
```

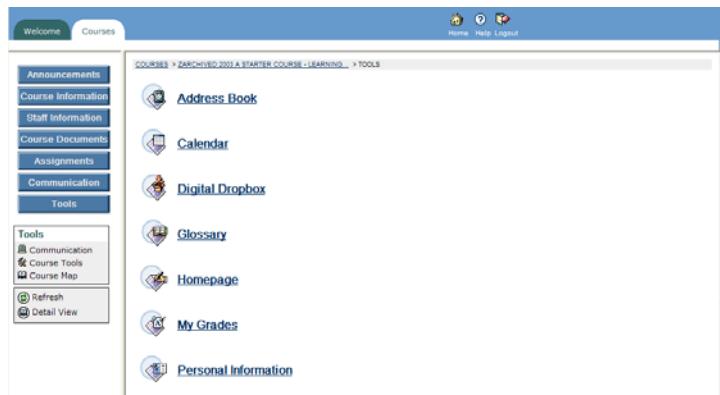
Changing your password

It is recommended when you first enter the system to change your password. To do this, follow the steps below.

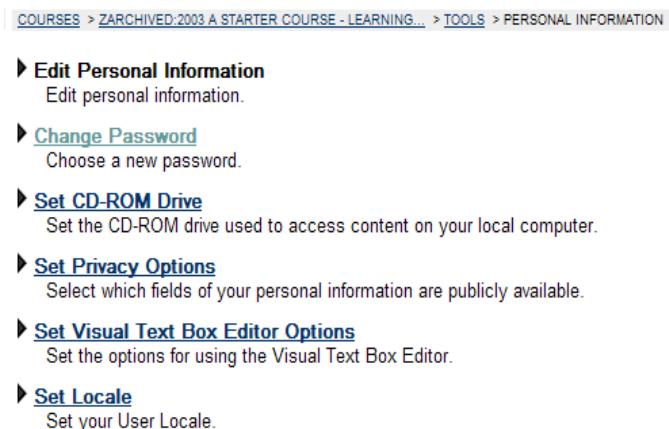
1. Click the **Tools** button on the Blackboard navigation panel.



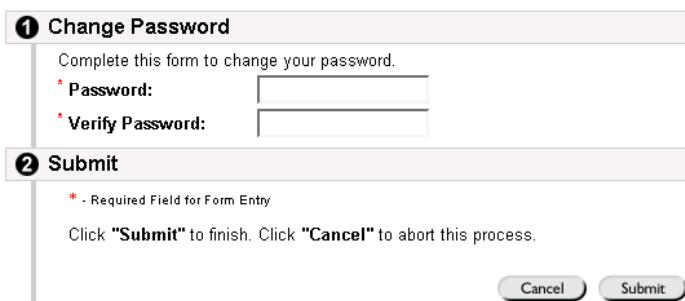
2. Click on **Personal Information** link



3. Click on **Change Password**.



4. Carefully type in your new user name in the boxes as highlighted below.



1 Change Password

Complete this form to change your password.

* **Password:**

* **Verify Password:**

2 Submit

* - Required Field for Form Entry

Click "Submit" to finish. Click "Cancel" to abort this process.

5. Click on the **Submit** button. Your password has now been changed.